



Laboratory Testing for SARS Coronavirus (SARS CoV)

Testing for SARS CoV requires approval from the Bureau of Epidemiology (850-245-4401) and is performed after influenza testing.

Specimen collection and timing

The CDC recommends that multiple specimens be collected from each suspect case as follows:

1. nasopharyngeal or oropharyngeal viral swabs
(note: swabs in bacterial media (e.g., Amies), swabs with wooden sticks, calcium alginate swabs are not satisfactory and cannot be assayed).
2. nasopharyngeal wash (sterile nonbacteriostatic saline) or aspirates
3. bronchoalveolar lavage or tracheal aspirate or pleural tap (Inpatient)
4. sputum
5. stool
6. blood (EDTA (purple top) tube)
7. serum (serum separator tube)

Each sample must be labeled with patient identification and date collected and accompanied by a completed Bureau of Laboratories submission form, which may be downloaded from the internet (http://www.doh.state.fl.us/lab/PDF_Files/doh_form.pdf). Include your contact name and telephone number on the form. Write "SARS" in the comment box at the bottom of the form.

Samples should be collected as soon as possible after onset of symptoms (1-3 days) to maximize the likelihood of pathogen detection. Additional samples for virological assay should also be collected during the second week of illness.

In addition to the acute serum, a serum should be collected at 10-14 day and another at 28 days post onset for determination of antibody titers to SARS CoV and other respiratory pathogens.

Specimen packaging:

Make sure each specimen is tightly closed; parafilm may be used to secure the cap.

Place each specimen in a separate zip-lock plastic bag each with enough absorbent material to absorb the entire contents in case of leakage or damage. Do NOT place the submission sheet inside the bag containing the specimen.

The shipping container must meet IATA packaging requirements for diagnostic specimens. Place the bags containing the specimens in a Styrofoam cooler with gel-ice and stuffing to prevent breakage. Place the lid on the cooler and place the submittal form(s) and an itemized list of package contents (in a plastic bag or envelope), on top of the lid.

Place the cooler in a cardboard box.

Label the package and waybill:

UN 3373 DIAGNOSTIC SPECIMEN
PACKED IN COMPLIANCE WITH
IATA PACKAGING INSTRUCTION 650

Specimen shipping:

Courier service is available for the acute specimens from cases that have been triaged through the Bureau of Epidemiology. Convalescent serum samples should be sent using routine clinical specimen shipping procedures. Send each serum, as soon as it has been collected, to the same laboratory to which the original samples had been sent. If that laboratory is not performing serological testing, it will forward both the acute and convalescent together to the testing laboratory.

Services available:

Contact one of the following Department of Health laboratories.

Lab	Jacksonville	Tampa	Miami
Address	1217 Pearl Street Jacksonville, FL 32202	3602 Spectrum Blvd Tampa, FL 33612	1325 N.W. 14th Ave. Miami, FL 33125
Contact	Valerie Mock	Dr. Lillian Stark	Dr. Jose Marcelino
Phone	904-791-1539 SC: 866-1539	813-974-5990 SC: 574-5990	305-324-2432 SC: 473-2432
PCR Testing	Influenza A & B (RT-PCR) SARS CoV (RT-PCR)	Influenza A & B (RT-PCR) SARS CoV (RT-PCR)	Influenza A & B (RT-PCR) SARS CoV (RT-PCR)
Culture/ Serology	Respiratory virus culture* Respiratory virus antibody** SARS CoV antibody assay	Respiratory virus culture* Respiratory virus antibody**	
Under Develop- ment		***	***

* Culture for influenza, parainfluenza, enterovirus, adenovirus

** Complement fixation test on paired (acute and convalescent) sera for influenza, RSV, parainfluenza, adenovirus, cytomegalovirus, *Mycoplasma pneumoniae*.

*** Rapid molecular assays for additional respiratory viruses are in development and will be available as soon as they are validated.

